

Bomb Not Ruled Out in Concorde Crash

by Dean Andromidas

The possibility that a bomb was the cause of the dramatic July 25 crash of Air France's Concorde Flight 4590 was revealed in the Paris daily *Le Monde* on Aug. 2. This raises the question of whether powerful Anglo-American interests were responsible for this explosion, as a warning to France, and other nations, not to break ranks at a time when the oligarchy's world financial system is on the brink of systemic collapse. The fact that 100 German citizens were killed in the catastrophe brings up the possibility that the crash was also designed to target the Franco-German alliance.

Le Monde quoted André Turcat, a former Concorde test pilot, saying, "A terrorist attack should not be excluded *a priori*." Amazingly, this was the first time such a possibility

has been raised by a highly credible source and reported in one of France's most important newspapers. Even more amazing was that this possibility has been blacked out of the international media. That fact itself should raise some obvious questions.

Also not widely reported outside France was that French President Jacques Chirac was an eyewitness to the catastrophe. His aircraft, returning from the G-8 meeting in Okinawa, landed only minutes prior to the destruction of one of France's national symbols. The decision to ground Air France's entire supersonic transport fleet was made personally by President Chirac.

The Le Monde Report

In the first of two articles, *Le Monde* reports on the statement of the special commission investigating the crash, headed by Alain Monnier, the inspector general of France's civil aviation authority, after it held its first meeting in Paris on Aug. 1. At the end of the meeting, Monnier said that all the speculation in the press is just that: speculation. He declared that the authorities "are not in a position to elaborate the most minimal scenario" of what happened to the Concorde. "An investigation such as that of the Concorde will take a year's work."

Concorde Crash Comes as France Bucks the British

Here is a statement by Jacques Cheminade, President of Solidarité et Progrès, the French co-thinkers of Lyndon LaRouche, issued on Aug. 3.

As a concerned French citizen, I feel it is my duty to stress two points regarding the July 25 crash of the Concorde in Paris. These elements necessitate articulating the hypothesis of sabotage, which is, of course, not proven materially, but which should be a matter of public concern and debate.

First, at this moment, a week after the crash, there is no satisfactory explanation for what happened. Diverse factors are known, but their interaction, and the chronology of the events, remain unknown, according to all that has been said about it.

Second, the crash took place at a moment in history, when the French authorities have challenged the Anglo-American oligarchy in many areas. One should not forget French Foreign Affairs Minister Hubert Védrine's "no" to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's plans for misusing "democracy" as a means of blackmailing nation-

states, at the recently concluded "World Democracy Conference" in Warsaw, Poland.

The oligarchy has answered by violent attacks against the French government, via the *Wall Street Journal* and through the declarations of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California, where she vehemently denounced the "delusions of grandeur" of the French.

It should be taken into consideration, that the Concorde is precisely *the* symbol of French independence and grandeur. An accident occurring thus to the plane, could be seen as "teaching a lesson" to France.

This hypothesis is not farfetched, if we consider that we are not in a normal period of history, but at the very point where the international financial and monetary system is about to collapse. Even Michel Camdessus, former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, admitted that "a catastrophe is ahead of us," if a profound change is not rapidly implemented. Under such circumstances, as shown by the Nov. 30, 1989 murder of German banker Alfred Herrhausen, the Anglo-American oligarchy has the habit of sending "messages" to those who threaten to challenge its dictatorship. . . .

I am confident that the special commission investigating the crash will do its work properly, with the support of the French government.



The Concorde is one of the symbols of pride of the French nation. The crash of one of the planes in Paris comes as France has been challenging Anglo-American policies.

The commission reported what has been established at this point, and what they still need to find out. What they know is:

1. One or two of the tires under the left wing exploded while the plane was taking off.
2. The fuel tank was damaged and leaking.
3. Engine number two came to a complete halt.
4. There was a significant power drop in engine number one.

Monnier emphasized that the problem is that they cannot at this point determine the chronology of all these events, or what initiated this series of events.

Nonetheless, the commission, in effect, discredits the scenario which international media have been carrying for the past weeks, that exploding tires and magnesium wheels cracking up had punctured the fuel tanks located in the forward part of the wing, and the leaking fuel had been set on fire by the ignition of the engines upon take-off. Or, that parts of the tires and wheels had been sucked into the engines, provoking the failure of the first and second engines, as well as causing the failure of the landing gear. The “exploding tire” theory has been particularly pushed by U.S. media, purting to quote U.S. aviation authorities.

While the investigators did not propose any answers, they asked some very obvious questions:

1. Why did the tires burst? Nothing proves that it either was the cause of the chain of events, or was even part of the chain of events causing the catastrophe. The tires could have blown out for any number of reasons, including locking brakes, a failure to properly inflate the tires, or—and this is important—they could have been punctured by pieces of

metal “from the fuel tank or from a part of the wing.” In that case, the investigators report, the cause of the chain of events would be located elsewhere.

2. What was the origin of the engine failure? It could have been that parts of the tires or wing, or that large birds were sucked into the engine. They could have also come to a halt for lack of fuel following a break in the fuel lines, or because the fuel tanks were empty after they had been punctured. The engines themselves did not break up, as some have suggested, because no engine parts were found on the runway.

3. How did the fire start in the wing? Although the media were quick to conclude that it was caused by the engine afterburners, this does not explain how the fire moved forward, since the hole in the wing fuel tanks was a considerable distance forward of the engine, and even forward of the landing gear. The aircraft was travelling at more than 400 kilometers an hour, making it impossible for flames to work their way forward. Although much has been reported about a 1979 Washington accident, in that case, the fuel did not ignite.

The commission itself said that all possibilities are being considered. “For the time being, nothing allows us to credit the hypothesis of a terrorist attack, but it is undoubtedly too early to exclude it categorically,” the commissioners said.

Le Monde also publishes an interview with former Concorde test pilot André Turcat, headlined: “Even If the Probability Is Low, the Hypothesis of a Terrorist Attack Should Not Be Excluded A Priori.”

Turcat draws some obvious conclusions from the commissioners’ report. On the blown tire theory, he said, “The

parts ejected must carry a lot of energy. . . . One of the photos shows the holes where the fuel was leaking as being quite a ways above the engines. When the plane is moving at 400 km per hour, the air current is very powerful, and if the fire was ignited by the post-combustion occurring in the back of the afterburners, I wonder how the flame was able to go up to the tank. The impact of the tires which provoked the leak cannot itself explain the starting of the fire at the fuel tank. The cause of the fuel igniting will therefore have to be determined by the investigation.”

On how the engines shut down, Turcat pointed out that they could have been shut down by the pilot: “Perhaps the pilot, after receiving the alert from the tower, thought it was on fire and decided to cut it.” Or, it might be that the power drop in both could have been caused by a “break in the engine command and control system or in the fuel delivery system.” Turcat then unambiguously states, “These series of events could have also been caused by the explosive device within the landing system.”

Le Monde asks, “You do not exclude the possibility of a terrorist operation?” Turcat answers, the “hypothesis is not very probable, but should not be excluded *a priori*.”

Other Questions Are Raised

An American military aviation expert with years of experience on supersonic aircraft told *EIR* that he concurred with these findings. He pointed out that a fire appearing at the fuel tank, could have only started at the fuel tank itself. In this regard, Turcat’s theory is very clear. A bomb would be placed, not necessarily on the wheels or landing gear as such, but in the compartment where the landing system retracts. This is deep enough, that a small bomb could be placed on a panel that abuts the fuel tank from inside the aircraft. The blast would have punctured the fuel tank, ignited the jet fuel, and caused the tires to explode. It would also explain the appearance of black smoke which would have to have come from oil in the aircraft’s various hydraulic systems, particularly for the landing gear. The failure of the engines at this critical point would have made the aircraft unmaneuverable, and then, unable to climb; it would simply have crashed.

The crash of the Concorde shares certain features with the two most recent unexplained crashes, where the sabotage or bomb theory has been hysterically denied, while being the only plausible cause.

The first was the SwissAir Flight 111 crash of Sept. 2, 1998. One of the passengers listed on the flight manifest was British renegade MI6 agent Richard Tomlinson, who missed the flight at the last minute. In that case, everyone agreed that a fire in the cockpit was the principal cause of the crash. Yet, to this day, there has been absolutely no way to explain the cause of the fire, since it was impossible for a fire of that nature to have been caused by anything in the engineering of the aircraft, no matter what went technically wrong. It had to have been a firebomb.

The second was the Oct. 31, 1999 crash of EgyptAir Flight 990, where the aircraft went from a level flight into a nosedive.

The Concorde catastrophe shares characteristics with these two. Both EgyptAir Flight 990 and SwissAir Flight 111 originated in New York, one of the worst airports for security. The Concorde that crashed in Paris, had *arrived* from New York, and about to make its return flight. A bomb could have been placed aboard in New York.

The second similarity is the management of the news. In the earlier cases, not only was terrorism not publicly considered, but the the press made the most absurd use of “leaks” from U.S. aviation authorities. In the SwissAir case, a U.S. aviation source purportedly said that “the pilot panicked,” and in the EgyptAir case, the pilot wanted to commit suicide and take more than 250 passengers, including 33 senior Egyptian military officers, with him.

The “exploding tire” theory has been reinforced by leaks ostensibly from the same U.S. agencies, in the most wild, and ridiculous manner. One American aviation expert put it rather colorfully to *EIR*: “You would have to be a *&#()! idiot to believe any of the explanations” coming out of the U.S. press.

While there is no doubt that the *Le Monde* revelations bear some form of “official” sanction and may be intended serve as a warning to the perpetrators, the question is: Will France back down from its current strategic positions?

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